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REST AND RESISTANCE. REFLECTIONS ON THE CHRONOPOLITICS OF DISCONNECTION*

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DESCANSO Y RESISTENCIA. REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA CRONOPOLÍTICA DE LA DESCONEXIÓN

Abstract
This article explores the intricate intersections among labour, leisure, and rest, shedding light on the political stakes of the erosion of boundaries between professional and personal life in digital capitalism. It critically examines how digital technologies cultivate a culture of perpetual connectivity, framing rest as a tool for productivity rather than as a right. Drawing on insights from some feminist perspectives, the article reinterprets rest and disconnection as acts of political resistance that challenge capitalist chronopolitics,

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while also recognising their potential to be co-opted by neoliberal narratives. In this view, rest emerges not merely as a personal pursuit but as a shared resource and a collective act of defiance against capitalist exploitation, advocating for temporal justice. This original approach situates the right to disconnect within broader political struggles, emphasising its role in reimagining time as a commons rather than a commodity. The aim is to contribute to the ongoing discourse on rest and the right to disconnect as pivotal components of political emancipation and social justice in the digital age.

Keywords
rest; disconnection; digital capitalism; temporal justice; collective resistance.

Resumen
Este artículo explora las complejas intersecciones entre trabajo, tiempo libre y descanso al destacar las implicaciones políticas de la disolución de los límites entre la vida profesional y la personal en el contexto del capitalismo digital. Se examina críticamente cómo las tecnologías digitales fomentan una cultura de conectividad perpetua y presentan el descanso como una herramienta de productividad en lugar de un derecho. A partir de algunos enfoques propuestos por una corriente del feminismo, se reinterpreta el descanso y la desconexión como actos de resistencia política que desafían la cronopolítica capitalista y, al mismo tiempo, se reconoce su susceptibilidad a ser cooptados por narrativas neoliberales. Desde esta perspectiva, el descanso no se concibe simplemente como un esfuerzo personal, sino como un recurso compartido y un acto colectivo de desafío contra la explotación capitalista, que aboga por la justicia temporal. Este enfoque original sitúa el derecho a la desconexión en luchas políticas más amplias y subraya su papel en la reimaginación del tiempo como bien común y no como mercancía. El objetivo es contribuir al discurso continuo sobre el descanso y el derecho a la desconexión como componentes clave de la emancipación política y de la justicia social en la era digital.

Palabras clave
descanso; desconexión; capitalismo digital; justicia temporal; resistencia colectiva.

To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.

(T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, 1941)

Labour, Leisure, and the Struggle for Rest

The distinction between labour and leisure has long occupied a pivotal place in political and philosophical debates, revealing profound tensions in how societies "comprehend" time and define human activity. In this regard, such a binary separation is a relatively modern construct, emerging alongside the rationality of industrial capitalism, where the commodification of time transformed labour into a measurable and exchangeable unit (Gorz, 1989). Against this framework, leisure was conceived as a complementary counterpart to labour: a necessary interval for rest and recovery that enabled the maintenance of productivity (Thompson, 1967). However, as industrial capitalism evolved into its post-industrial and digital iterations, this distinction has steadily eroded. Productivity and consumption have infiltrated domains once considered private and non-economic, marking a profound shift in the relationship between time, labour, and personal life (Gorz, 1989; Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). The advent of digital technologies has amplified this erosion, creating a culture where workers are expected to remain perpetually available. This phenomenon, often referred to as the "always-on" culture (Crary, 2013; Turkle, 2015), has transformed labour into an activity that is no longer confined to specific hours or locations. Digital tools, such as smartphones, emails, and instant messaging platforms (and digital platforms in general), have not only expanded the temporal scope of labour but have also altered its spatial dimensions, enabling labour to infiltrate homes, relationships, and even moments of rest. In this sense, the boundaries between labour and leisure have become increasingly porous, blurring the line between what constitutes labour and what constitutes time away from it. This critical perspective enhances the understanding of how digital technologies can be employed not only as tools of efficiency but also as instruments of temporal control.

The concept of porosity offers a valuable framework for understanding this transformation (Genin, 2016). Porosity describes the extent to which contemporary technologies and cultural expectations allow labour to permeate spaces, times, and relationships

traditionally reserved for rest or personal fulfilment. In the digital age, the distinction between labour and non-labour time is no longer rigid but fluid, with professional demands often intruding upon moments of leisure. This condition highlights a broader structural issue: the diminishing capacity of individuals to assert control over their own time as the intertwining of professional and personal spheres becomes increasingly normalised. The result is a heightened sense of obligation and an inability to fully disconnect, a dynamic that reinforces workers' subordination to the demands of capitalist productivity. Digital technologies have radically intensified the porosity of boundaries between labour and personal life, reshaping the temporal and spatial dimensions of labour in unprecedented ways. This porosity is evident in the rise of the process of "presence bleed," an expression coined to describe how professional obligations seep into spaces and times traditionally reserved for personal life: "Presence bleed explains the familiar experience whereby the location and time of work become secondary considerations faced with a 'to do' list that seems forever out of control" (Gregg, 2011, p. 2). Far from liberating workers through flexibility, these technologies can create an environment in which individuals are always potentially "on call," fostering a culture of pervasive surveillance and implicit control. Moreover, the erosion of boundaries between labour and leisure often occurs under the guise of productivity and efficiency. For instance, remote labour, initially celebrated as a means of achieving work-life balance, has led to an even deeper fusion of professional and personal spheres. Employees are increasingly reporting difficulties in delineating their roles, as the workplace has expanded into private spaces such as homes and bedrooms (Mazmanian et al., 2013). This spatial intrusion not only disrupts routines but also creates a constant state of partial engagement, undermining psychological well-being.

As a result, porosity and flexibility become mechanisms through which the demands of capitalist productivity assert themselves over personal self-determination. Workers not only struggle to disconnect from their professional roles but also internalise the expectation of constant availability as a norm. This dynamic reflects broader changes in the organisation of time under digital capitalism, where the boundaries between labour, rest, and play dissolve into a continuous cycle of commodified activity (Crary, 2013). In this light, the digital age does not merely blur the lines between labour and leisure but actively reconstructs these categories to serve the imperatives of market logic and technological efficiency:

> Because of the permeability, even indistinction, between the times of work and of leisure, the skills and gestures that once would have been restricted to the

> workplace are now a universal part of the 24/7 texture of one's electronic life. The ubiquity of technological interfaces inevitably leads users to strive for increasing fluency and adeptness. (Crary, 2013, p. 58)

Günther Anders's (1956) critique of modern production systems provides additional insight into this phenomenon. The German philosopher "prophesied" that the logic of industrial capitalism not only dictates the rhythms of labour but also colonises leisure, transforming it into an extension of labour. Under capitalism, leisure is often reduced to a passive recovery period designed to restore workers' capacity to produce rather than serving as a space for genuine autonomy or creative fulfilment. The commodification of time has thus rendered leisure instrumental, subordinating it to the broader goals of productivity and consumption. According to Anders, the dominance of machines and automation in modern production processes has further alienated labour from its human dimension, reducing it to a mechanical act driven by external imperatives. In this context, leisure time, far from offering a true escape from labour, becomes merely a recovery period needed to restore the individual within a system that continues to exploit their productive potential. These observations are also linked to the obsolescence of labour that goes hand in hand with the overarching obsolescence of the human being (Anders, 1980). Labour not only loses its intrinsic meaning, but leisure time, once thought of as a realm of freedom and creativity, ends up being anchored to the same capitalist system that denies individuals a genuine experience of disconnection or autonomy within the community. Rest becomes a tool for self-optimisation, further tethered to the demands of capitalist productivity. The political implications of this transformation lie in the depolitisation of time as a collective issue, with leisure and rest relegated to the realm of self-management. In this view, leisure is never truly free but is instead constrained by the same logics that limit its transformative potential.

From a theoretical and political point of view, these dynamics provoke critical inquiries into the role of time in sustaining systems of domination. Foremost among these inquiries is the question of how, under late capitalism, time itself becomes a significant mechanism of control and regulation. The concept of time-space compression highlights how neoliberalism accelerates economic processes, collapsing traditional boundaries of time and space (Harvey, 1990). After all, this temporal acceleration aligns with the theory of social acceleration, which describes the increasing pace of life under modern capitalism (Rosa, 2013, 2019). This acceleration not only restructures the pace of economic processes but also intensifies the erosion of temporal boundaries between labour and leisure. By compelling individuals to adapt to an ever-accelerating rhythm,

social acceleration undermines the capacity to exercise temporal sovereignty, a phenomenon that exacerbates the porosity of time (Rosa, 2013). This observation reinforces the argument that capitalist chronopolitics strategically manipulates time to optimise productivity while diminishing opportunities for genuine rest and disconnection. Such temporal compression refers to the way advances in technology, communication, and transportation have effectively "shrunk" the world, allowing economic processes to unfold at unprecedented speed across vast distances. While this acceleration has facilitated global trade and connectivity, it has also intensified pressures on workers, increasing the demand for immediate responses, higher productivity, and constant adaptability. The speed of technological and economic processes does not merely reshape temporal and spatial boundaries but fundamentally alters the fabric of social and political life. Speed itself becomes a form of power, privileging those who can act, respond, and adapt faster than others, whether in markets, warfare, or communication systems. Such a condition resonates with the emergence of a "tyranny of the instantaneous," in which the acceleration of communication and economic processes compresses temporal boundaries, compelling individuals to respond at the speed of digital transactions (Virilio, 1986). The convergence of these dynamics illustrates how capitalist chronopolitics manipulates time to maximise productivity, further complicating the capacity to disconnect.

Therefore, it is understandable why under neoliberalism, the individual is framed as an "entrepreneurial self," responsible for optimising their own productivity and well-being (Brown, 2015; Dardot & Laval, 2013). In this context, leisure and rest are no longer collective rights but personal responsibilities, tied to the logic of self-management and self-improvement. This neoliberal framing depoliticises the structural conditions that undermine rest, shifting the burden of disconnection onto individuals while obscuring the systemic forces that perpetuate exploitation. Thus, the blurring of boundaries between labour and leisure is not merely a technological or cultural phenomenon but a deeply political issue. It reflects a broader reorganisation of time under capitalism, where both labour and rest are increasingly commodified and regulated to serve the imperatives of productivity. The political dimension of this issue lies in the fact that control over time becomes synonymous with control over workers themselves. Time, once considered a fundamental dimension of human self-determination, is now tightly controlled and regulated by market demands and technological systems. To address these challenges, scholars argue that it is essential to reimagine time as a site of resistance and collective struggle (Hardt & Negri, 2000). The fight for time—both labour time and leisure time—becomes a crucial front in challenging the capitalist structures that define human existence and exploit human labour. However, can this struggle continue under

the demand for the right to disconnect, or must it already be framed within a broader, more complex framework?

The Ambiguity of the Right to Disconnect

The origins of the right to disconnect can be traced back to early labour movements that sought to establish boundaries between labour and personal life, such as the 19th-century campaign for the eight-hour workday (Thompson, 1967). These efforts reflect a long-standing struggle against the commodification of time, demonstrating that the tension between labour and rest has deep political and historical roots. In recent years, the debate has gained momentum, driven by a clear demand for the right to disconnect. This right has been formally recognised in various countries, ensuring that workers have legal protection against the expectation of responding to work-related communications outside their designated working hours.[1] While labour becomes increasingly disengaged from physical locations and traditional time dimensions, the concept of time itself is being redefined, as are the related rights. As seen, in a world where labour can follow individuals beyond office hours via emails, messages, and mobile devices, the accumulation of capital seems to expand to all dimensions of the human, especially time. This "chronophagy" (Galibert, 2012) reflects a broader trend in which capitalist systems seek to control not only human labour but also the rhythms of individuals' time. Thus, the contemporary vindication for the right to disconnect has emerged as a timely response to the challenges of perpetual connectivity in the digital age. Although not yet specifically legislated on a large scale, it seeks to establish boundaries between labour and personal life, offering protection from the encroachments of digital labour.

Notwithstanding, while the right to disconnect is often celebrated as a progressive labour right, it risks being co-opted again into the logic of capitalism itself. In fact, the critical question is whether the revindication to disconnect may be psychopolitically configured as a product of techno-capitalism in disguise, raising doubts about

[1] As mentioned, the right to disconnect has gained increasing political and regulatory attention in recent years (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2020; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2022). Internationally, while no binding legal framework exists, the ILO has emphasised, through its conventions, the importance of work-life balance and rest, even though it does not explicitly address digital disconnection. In Europe, the right to disconnect has been enacted into national policies. France led the way with the *Loi Travail* (2016), which requires firms to negotiate measures to limit digital communication outside work hours. The European Union has also promoted discussion of the issue, placing it within broader work-life balance initiatives, such as the Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC), but it has not specifically legislated on disconnection. In the Italian context, disconnection gave birth to a wide debate during the COVID-19 pandemic and showed the risks of blurred boundaries between labour and private life. Italy has not yet enacted any stand-alone legislation; however, in the framework of the so-called "smart working," Decree 104/2020 regulated digital communication outside of work time. Furthermore, the issue of the right to disconnect gained political attention with the 2022 Italian Budget Law, which introduced specific protections for telecommuters.

its transformative potential. As capitalism has historically absorbed and commodified resistance, we must interrogate whether the right to disconnect may follow a similar trajectory, aligning with rather than disrupting capitalist imperatives. One of the key critiques of the right to disconnect is, indeed, its individualised framing. By framing disconnection as an individualised solution to systemic problems, such vindication may inadvertently reinforce the very structures it seeks to challenge, as well as become another tool for maintaining capitalist productivity rather than dismantling its underlying structures. This paradox arises when disconnection is framed not as a collective right but as an individualised measure. While it ostensibly empowers workers, it also places the burden of regulating connectivity on individuals rather than addressing systemic pressures. As Fisher (2009) argued, neoliberal systems often present personal responsibility as a substitute for structural change. Workers are thus tasked with navigating the boundaries of labour and rest within a system that continues to valorise hyper-labour and productivity. For example, a worker who chooses to "disconnect" under this right might face implicit consequences, such as being viewed as less dedicated or ambitious than their peers. Such a dynamic shifts the responsibility for maintaining work-life balance onto individuals while leaving the broader culture of hyper-labour intact. Capitalism has a long history of commodifying resistance. The well-being industry is a prime example, transforming practices like mindfulness and yoga—originally forms of spiritual or political resistance—into lucrative markets (Purser, 2019).

In this sense, corporate wellness programmes or flexible working policies may appear progressive but often reinforce exploitative structures by obscuring broader demands for fair wages, reduced working hours, or job security (Fleming, 2017). Such initiatives reflect a growing tendency to commodify well-being, hollowing out its transformative potential in favour of maintaining existing power dynamics. Similarly, the right to disconnect risks becoming commodified, with employers' marketing policies of "healthy disconnection" as a feature of their brand identity. Corporations might adopt the language of disconnection not to protect workers but to enhance productivity. For instance, enforcing fixed disconnection hours could simply ensure that workers are well-rested enough to meet the demands of increasingly intense workloads during their connected hours. As Han (2015) argues, the logic of productivity infiltrates even supposed acts of resistance, turning them into tools for optimising performance. Furthermore, tech companies are already capitalising on the discourse of digital well-being. Products such as smartphone apps and online platforms that track screen time or enforce "focus modes" market themselves as tools for disconnection, monetising the very conditions of hyper-labour they help perpetuate (Wajcman, 2015).

Another significant ambiguity surrounding the right to disconnect is its potential to exacerbate workplace inequalities. Moreover, gig economy platforms, such as ride-sharing and food delivery services, actively encourage "always-on" behaviour by using algorithms that penalise workers for inactivity. This technological enforcement of connectivity highlights the need for digital labour rights that account for the specific vulnerabilities of platform workers (Wood et al., 2019).[2] While high-status, salaried professionals often have the autonomy to disconnect without facing adverse consequences, precarious workers and those in the gig economy frequently lack this privilege, leaving them more vulnerable to pressures of constant availability. As Federici (2012) outlines, the structures of capitalism disproportionately exploit low-wage workers, who are often excluded from protective labour policies. In sectors like logistics, hospitality, or the gig economy, disconnection is rarely an option, as workers rely on constant connectivity to secure shifts or jobs. The right to disconnect, if not implemented equitably, risks becoming a luxury reserved for white-collar workers, leaving others trapped in exploitative cycles of availability. The right to disconnect also risks reinforcing the neoliberal separation of "labour" and "life" as distinct domains. The capitalist separation of labour from personal life often conceals the extent to which labour shapes individual identity and permeates everyday existence (Hochschild, 1997). Policies that enforce disconnection hours may unintentionally legitimise excessive workloads during working hours, intensifying the "time bind" rather than alleviating it. Moreover, the framing of disconnection as a "solution" to work-life conflict implies that personal rest is sufficient to mitigate the harms of hyper-labour. This logic echoes what can be described as the "temporal fix" of capitalism—policies that adjust temporal rhythms without challenging the overarching structures of exploitation and inequality (Sharma, 2014). The danger of the right to disconnect becoming a product of capitalism lies in its potential to reproduce rather than resist the logics of neoliberalism.

Considering the above, by emphasising individual boundaries rather than fostering collective change, the right to disconnect risks being absorbed into the very systems it seeks to challenge, aligning with capitalist values of self-management and efficiency. As

[2] The rise of platform-based gig jobs complicates the right to disconnect, as algorithmic management and flexible scheduling perpetuate constant connectivity. In response, the EU Directive on Platform Work (Proposal COM/2021/762 final) seeks to improve working conditions for gig workers, including enhanced digital rights and protections against algorithmic control. Specifically, Article 6 proposes transparency obligations for algorithmic management, requiring platforms to inform workers about decision-making processes affecting working conditions. This legislation acknowledges the temporal inequalities faced by gig workers, who remain "always-on" to secure tasks. However, the directive's potential to address temporal justice hinges on its capacity to redefine employment status and enforce digital disconnection rights within gig economy structures.

noted, contemporary capitalism has a remarkable ability to co-opt critiques, incorporating them into its structures to perpetuate itself (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). For the right to disconnect to have a truly meaningful impact, it should go beyond individual approaches and align with broader labour movements that advocate for universal protections, fair treatment of precarious workers, and a broader re-evaluation of the role of labour in society. To move beyond the limitations of an individualised conception of the right to disconnect, it is necessary to explore alternative frameworks that emphasise collective resistance and shared temporal autonomy. By shifting the focus from individual responsibility to communal agency, the discourse can challenge neoliberal narratives and reclaim time as a commons. This perspective paves the way for a more radical reimagining of rest.

The Commons of Disconnection. When Rest Becomes a Radical Political Act

Given the ambiguities emerging from the theoretical and political analysis of the right to disconnect, it may be useful to explore certain strands of feminist theories that, by challenging the notion of the individual, focus on the collective temporal dimension of rest. Indeed, some feminist insights provide us with significant reflections on how leisure time can represent a collective battlefield. The exploitation of women, particularly black women, is often linked to their inability to access free time, and, consequently, rest becomes a systemic issue rooted in the exploitation of marginalised communities, linking it to broader social justice and feminist struggles (Davis, 1981; hooks, 2000; Ruiz, 1998). With this regard, "when women in the home spend all their time attending to the needs of others, home is a workplace for her, not a site of relaxation, comfort, and pleasure" (hooks, 2000, p. 50). By shifting the focus from individualised approaches to systemic and shared practices, these perspectives offer a more nuanced framework for understanding rest as a site of political struggle. This analysis aims to broaden the scope of comprehension, moving beyond neoliberal paradigms to explore rest not merely as a right but as a collective act of resistance and reimagining of time itself. As bell hooks[3] (1999, 2000) argued, rest can be interpreted as a radical form of self-care, particularly

[3] Born Gloria Jean Watkins (1952–2021) was a feminist theorist, writer, and activist of the 20th and 21st centuries. She adopted the pen name "bell hooks" in honour of her great-grandmother, choosing lowercase letters to draw attention away from her personal identity and towards her ideas. Her work explored themes such as intersectional feminism, racism, love, culture, and education, consistently emphasising the need to connect theory to lived experience. She examined the oppression of black women through the intertwined forces of racism and sexism. Through a profound reimagining of love as a political and transformative force, bell hooks was a vocal advocate for collective struggle against all forms of oppression, rejecting hierarchical systems of privilege and promoting an inclusive, intersectional approach to feminism.

in societies that commodify human effort and define individuals primarily by their productivity. Rest, in this direction, becomes an act of rebellion to the extent that "choosing 'wellness' is an act of political resistance" (hooks, 1993, p. 7). It becomes political when it actively defies the expectations of relentless productivity. Moreover, the politicisation of rest necessitates a critical reflection on how its framing risks perpetuating neoliberal ideals of self-optimisation. By promoting free time as an individual solution to burnout or overwork, there is a danger of depoliticising the systemic roots of exploitation, reducing rest to a means of restoring productivity rather than challenging the structures that demand implacable labour (Sharma, 2014). Thus, while rest is undoubtedly an act of defiance, its co-optation into capitalist narratives underscores the importance of situating it within broader struggles for temporal justice. Within the opposition between labour and leisure, rest challenges the capitalist notion that time should always be optimised for labour or consumption. By resisting the relentless demand for productivity, rest becomes not only a personal necessity but also a political act (Vescio, 2024), directly opposing systems that exploit human resources and blur the boundaries between labour and non-labour life. In this perspective, the proposal reframes free time as a collective and feminist practice, emphasising how the chronic exhaustion imposed by capitalist systems disproportionately impacts women and marginalised communities. Rest, in this sense, is not only an individual right but also a form of collective resistance, advocating for temporal justice and shared well-being.

Rest, while seemingly private, carries public significance. Hersey, founder of *The Nap Ministry,*[4] conceptualises rest as a collective act of resistance, especially for communities historically subjected to systemic exploitation (Hersey, 2022). She frames it as a form of reparative justice and communal healing, disrupting cycles of exploitation and reclaiming time as a shared resource:

[4] *The Nap Ministry* is a cultural organisation and movement founded in 2016 by Tricia Hersey, a poet, performance artist and activist. The movement centres on promoting rest as a radical political act and a tool for healing, particularly for black and marginalised communities disproportionately affected by the oppressive systems of capitalism and white supremacy. *The Nap Ministry* views rest, such as napping, pausing, or slowing down, as a form of resistance against a capitalist culture that exploits bodies and minds, demanding endless productivity. Hersey argues that rest is not a luxury but a fundamental human right, offering liberation from the relentless demands of hyper-productivity, a legacy rooted in the historical exploitation of enslaved people and perpetuated in modern systems. Grounded in intersectional feminism and social justice, the movement highlights how Black women, in particular, have been systematically denied rest. *The Nap Ministry* frames rest as a collective and spiritual practice, inviting communities to reimagine rest not merely as an individual necessity but as a shared act of resistance against systemic oppression. The organisation's initiatives include hosting group events and workshops centred on collective rest, sharing educational resources on social media, and inspiring global audiences to rethink their relationship with work and rest. In her 2022 book, *Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto*, Hersey expands on these ideas, positioning rest as a transformative act that dismantles harmful systems of exploitation. At its core, *The Nap Ministry's* message, captured in its mantra "Rest is Resistance," invites us to envision a more equitable world where rest is central to our well-being and collective liberation.

> Rest isn't a luxury, but an absolute necessity if we're going to survive and thrive. Rest isn't an afterthought, but a basic part of being human. Rest is a divine right. Rest is a human right. […] Like hope, rest is disruptive; it allows space for us to envision new possibilities. We must reimagine rest within a capitalist system. (Hersey, 2022, p. 60)

When rest becomes collective—when people nap in public, refuse overtime, or advocate for systemic change—it transcends the private sphere. The collective dimension of free time also confronts the challenge of inclusivity: whose rest is protected, and whose labour enables it? As intersectional feminist critiques remind us, the ability to rest collectively often depends on the invisible labour of marginalised groups, such as domestic workers or gig economy labourers, who remain excluded from many labour protections. Therefore, to reimagine rest as a collective commons, it is crucial to integrate the demands of precarious and undervalued workers, ensuring that free time is not a privilege but a universal right (hooks, 1993; Federici, 2012). Rest can indeed be understood as a form of collective sovereignty, a reclaiming of time as a shared commons. Drawing from Arendt (1958), the time beyond labour can be seen as part of the vita activa—a public practice that fosters reflection and solidarity. Historically, public spaces like parks and libraries served as sites of communal rest, allowing individuals to temporarily escape the demands of labour and engage in shared practices of repose and reflection. However, the privatisation of these spaces and the commodification of time have eroded opportunities for collective leisure. Reimagining rest as a commons means not only creating appropriate physical spaces but also fostering societal structures that protect collective well-being. At the same time, the right to disconnect reflects the individual's capacity to assert sovereignty over their own time and space. Arendt's distinction between labour, work, and action provides a useful lens through which to view this right. Disconnecting from work-related communications is not just a passive withdrawal; it can represent an active assertion of the self's ability to reclaim and redefine personal time as distinct from commodified labour.

The search for personal sovereignty over time can also be seen as connected to Honneth's (1996) theory of recognition, which holds that recognition is fundamental to individual freedom and that its absence leads to alienation and subordination. In the context of digital capitalism, where labour infiltrates all aspects of life, the right to disconnect may be seen as a struggle for recognition—an assertion of temporal autonomy against the pressures of capitalist productivity. The right to disconnect, in this light, can be read as a demand for the recognition of workers' humanity beyond their

economic value. By asserting the right to rest, individuals reclaim their capacity to exist as subjects outside the commodification of labour, challenging a system that often denies this autonomy. However, for this act to be truly transformative, it must extend beyond individual assertion to include collective recognition and address the structural conditions that constrain autonomy. The debate between recognition and redistribution is well-known, highlighting the tendency to underestimate the role of economic and institutional structures in enabling recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). In this context, what emerges is that structural economic inequalities are often overlooked in favour of an emphasis on symbolic struggles. Applied to rest and disconnection, this critique again highlights the limitations of framing them solely as individual rights. Without collective and structural reforms—such as fair wages and reduced working hours—rest risks becoming a privilege inaccessible to precarious workers. Fraser also warns against neoliberal co-optation, where rights like disconnection are individualised and depoliticised, serving capitalist productivity rather than challenging systemic exploitation. An interwoven approach of recognition and redistribution is essential to ensure rest is genuinely collective and inclusive. The argument that recognition must be coupled with redistribution provides a vital lens for examining temporal justice. In the context of digital capitalism, where productivity is prioritised over human flourishing, the right to disconnect risks being co-opted as an individualised privilege rather than a collective right. By advocating for both economic and symbolic justice, Fraser's critique challenges the neoliberal tendency to depoliticise rest. This approach calls for a radical rethinking of temporal autonomy, positioning rest as a shared resource rather than a commodified luxury. This aligns with feminist critiques that emphasise the intersection of temporal and social inequalities, urging a redefinition of time not as a commodity but as a space for collective flourishing.

These insights challenge the neoliberal tendency to frame leisure as a personalised or privatised choice, instead situating it as a site of potential emancipation and solidarity. From this perspective, the division of time into labour and free time is not neutral. It is shaped by power dynamics that reflect and perpetuate broader inequalities. The capitalist imperative to maximise efficiency and extract value from human effort prioritises economic output over human flourishing, marginalising those who cannot or will not conform to its temporal expectations. By reclaiming rest as a space for resistance, creativity, and collective well-being, critical theorists invite us to reimagine the role of time in fostering more equitable and humane social structures. The claim for recognition also offers valuable reflections on temporal justice. Recognising individuals' need for rest and autonomy within the community, rather than their time, challenges the

capitalist appropriation of temporal rhythms. It suggests that temporal justice cannot be achieved through isolated policies but requires a societal shift that values time as a shared resource, fostering conditions where rest is accessible to all. The intersection of such perspectives highlights how rest and leisure are not apolitical or neutral practices but spaces where resistance to capitalist chronophagy can unfold. Rest, when framed as an intentional disruption of exploitative labour systems, can become a form of defiance against the commodification of time and the dehumanisation of workers. Leisure, likewise, holds transformative potential when it shifts from an individualistic pursuit to a collective demand that reimagines labour rights and temporal autonomy. However, we must also be aware that the feminist theories we addressed, while offering valuable critiques of capitalist and patriarchal structures, risk reproducing certain limitations when their focus on the collective fails to fully interrogate how the intersections of race, class, and ability shape access to rest. For example, the emphasis on "care" as a collective practice must also grapple with how unpaid care labour, disproportionately carried out by women, has been historically naturalised and exploited, raising concerns about whether collective rest can ever be fully disentangled from the structures it seeks to resist (Federici, 2012). For this reason, the debate can only continue.

The Politics of Rest. Conclusive Remarks

The linear and accelerated temporality that dominates neoliberal societies is deeply intertwined with the logic of productivity and relentless progress. Rest introduces alternative temporalities—such as cyclical, idle, or reflective time—that disrupt these paradigms and challenge the political economy of time (Baraitser, 2017). The right to disconnect holds significant potential within this framework, but risks being subsumed within neoliberal logic if it remains individualistic. Without addressing the structural conditions that perpetuate inequalities—such as precarious labour, digital surveillance, and economic exploitation—the right may remain inaccessible to those in precarious employment or marginalised communities, deepening temporal inequalities. For instance, the structural conditions required to exercise the right to disconnect (like economic security or workplace autonomy) are unevenly distributed, often favouring higher-status professionals over gig economy workers. This disparity highlights the need to embed the right to disconnect within broader struggles for economic justice, labour protections, and equitable access to temporal sovereignty. Gig workers and low-wage employees, for example, often lack the flexibility and resources to assert their right to disconnection, as their work schedules are dictated by algorithms and customer demands rather than their own needs. The rise of surveillance technologies, such as

AI-based performance-tracking tools, further compounds these challenges, creating a scenario in which disconnection may be actively discouraged or even penalised.

Against this background, we have seen how rest and disconnection can be framed not merely as individual rights. By creating spaces to pause, reflect, and reimagine, rest resists the commodification of time and reclaims temporality as a shared and humanised dimension of life. Similarly, the systemic undervaluation of care labour within capitalist systems reveals how rest transcends the individual to become a collective act of care and resistance when conceived as a communal and relational practice. It acknowledges the shared labour required to sustain society and emphasises the interdependence that underpins human well-being. Framing rest as a commons may offer a way to reorient society around values of solidarity and mutual support, challenging the isolating individualism of neoliberal ideologies. They can be aspired to as deeply political acts that challenge the commodification of life and labour. Reclaiming rest as a collective good resists systems that prioritise profit over human flourishing, opening the possibility for alternative societal values to emerge. Rest, when understood as a shared commons, invites us to reimagine temporal justice and prioritise societal renewal over productivity. International labour standards have long recognised rest as essential to workers' well-being. To address this vision, policymakers, unions, and activists could ensure that the right to disconnect does not merely reinforce existing inequalities but actively challenges them. This requires connecting disconnection to broader frameworks of digital and labour rights, such as regulating workplace surveillance, addressing algorithmic management, and creating protections for all workers. A regulatory framework that limits workplace surveillance and guarantees time away from labour communications could ensure that workers, regardless of their employment type, are not subject to digital overreach. Cultural shifts are equally necessary: rest should be reframed not as an individual luxury or productivity tool but as a fundamental collective right tied to human dignity and systemic change. Ultimately, rest and the right to disconnect offer a radical reimagining of the relationship between labour, time, and human well-being. By disrupting the continuous acceleration of digital capitalism, they challenge the neoliberal logic of productivity and open pathways to a more humane society. The creation of new legal frameworks and the integration of these principles into everyday practices can ensure that rest is accessible to all, making it a shared tool for social transformation rather than a privilege for the few. As society moves further into the digital age, the act of reclaiming rest takes on an ever-greater urgency, providing an opportunity to rethink the role of time in human life and labour.

Notwithstanding, further clarifications are necessary at this point. While the feminist frameworks employed in this article offer reflections on the intersection of labour, rest, and systemic inequality, they are not without their risks. A part of feminist perspectives often foregrounds the experiences of women and marginalised groups, which is essential, but it also risks overgeneralising these experiences without fully accounting for intersections of race, class, and ability. As bell hooks (1999) herself argues, feminist analysis must avoid universalising the experiences of women, recognising that systems of oppression operate differently across diverse contexts. Similarly, the critique of unpaid care labour, while central to understanding the exploitation of reproductive labour, can inadvertently reinforce a dichotomy between productive and unproductive labour, failing to fully reimagine the value of care outside capitalist frameworks. Furthermore, the emphasis on collective rest as resistance may unintentionally romanticise "care" as a solution without addressing its co-optation by neoliberal logic, as critics like Fraser (2013) caution. In this sense, she argues that these feminist strategies must integrate both recognition and redistribution to ensure systemic transformation rather than reinforcing existing inequalities. It would be valuable to explore more deeply how certain feminist approaches to rest and disconnection might unintentionally reinforce hierarchies or overlook certain perspectives.

To draw a conclusion, the line of investigation presented in these pages tried to underscore the profound political implications of rest and the right to disconnect within the broader context of digital capitalism. While the right to disconnect is often celebrated as a progressive step toward reclaiming autonomy, its framing as an individualised solution risks perpetuating the very systems of exploitation it seeks to challenge. By examining the intersections of labour, leisure, and temporal justice through feminist and critical theoretical lenses, this article seeks to highlight the opportunity for a collective reimagining of time as a shared resource. For this reason, it is a discourse that must be addressed at a superstructural level before it is normative. At the same time, this analysis acknowledges its inherent limitations. While the outlined perspectives illuminate the common dimensions of labour and rest, further exploration of how these dynamics intersect with race, class, and other axes of inequality is crucial (also beyond the Western understanding). The comprehension of rest as a political commons also confronts the entrenched structures of neoliberalism that resist systemic change. Despite these challenges, the urgency of addressing the commodification of time cannot be overstated. Rest and the right to disconnect should be reimagined as collective and inclusive practices, embedded in broader struggles for temporal justice and labour rights. The transformative potential of rest lies in its capacity to disrupt the relentless demands

of capitalist productivity, providing a foundation for alternative, more humane temporalities. Thus, these reflections are offered not as answers but as a contribution to an ongoing and necessary conversation. By reframing disconnection as a collective act of resistance embedded in broader struggles for temporal justice, this article aims to challenge neoliberal narratives and advocate for a radical reimagining of time as a commons. This perspective not only contributes to the discourse on digital labour but also broadens the political significance of temporal sovereignty, envisioning futures where rest is recognised as a shared human right rather than a privilege.

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